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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 007652

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [KNNP](#) [IR](#) [CH](#)  
SUBJECT: PRC/IRAN: MFA SAYS TEHRAN SHOWS LITTLE FLEXIBILITY  
ON ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM

REF: MOSCOW 04120

Classified By: Political External Unit Chief Edgard Kagan. Reasons 1.5  
(b/d).

Summary

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11. (C) Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai went to Tehran April 15)16 to deliver the message that Iran must stop its uranium enrichment activities in order to prevent the current situation from spiraling out of control, according to MFA Iran Desk Director Xu Wei. Xu, who served as Cui's interpreter, provided a readout that tracked closely with Cui's readout to Under Secretary Burns in Moscow (reftel). The Iranians took a very tough line with Cui, rejecting China's warnings and proposals, saying that negotiations are "useless," while expressing a desire for direct talks with the United States. Xu asserted that there is a faction in the Iranian government that is waiting for what it perceives to be international provocation to aggressively push ahead its nuclear program. Xu argues that Iran's young, well-educated population is supportive of the current regime but want Tehran to establish normal relations with the United States. End Summary.

Suspension of Enrichment Activities is the Only Way Out

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12. (C) During an April 20 meeting with poloff, MFA West Asian and North African Affairs Department Iran Desk Director Xu Wei provided a readout of Assistant Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai's meetings in Tehran that tracked closely with Cui's readout to Under Secretary Burns (reftel). Noting that he had served as the PRC delegation's interpreter, Xu recounted that Supreme National Security Council Deputy Secretary General Javad Vaidi told Cui that Tehran is "tired of wasting time, has been cheated by the EU-3 and lost three years in the development of its nuclear program." (Note: Xu did not accompany Cui to Moscow. End Note.) Several Iranian interlocutors (NFI) told Cui that Iran hopes for direct talks with the United States on the nuclear issue, according to Xu. He said Cui's key message was that Tehran must stop its uranium enrichment activities to prevent the current situation from spiraling out of control. Cui stressed Beijing's unhappiness with Tehran's announcement that it has successfully enriched uranium, warning in strong terms that Iran is provoking the international community. Xu expressed great frustration that Iran rejected the Chinese overtures.

Beijing Probing U.S. Response to Russia's Iran Policy

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13. (C) Xu was not willing to discuss Beijing's perceptions of where Russia currently stands on the Iranian nuclear issue. He did note with concern press reports claiming that Russia

is planning to sell Iran sophisticated air-defense systems and wondered what the U.S. reaction would be if the sale goes through.

#### Interlocutors Showing Little Flexibility

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¶4. (C) Xu stated that in the past he has not had much contact with Supreme National Security Council Deputy Secretary General Javad Vaidi, but noted that Vaidi is now playing a central role in Iran's negotiations on its nuclear program. (Note: Xu served in the PRC Embassy in Tehran for five years, is one of the MFA's top Persian linguists, and claims to be directly involved in most of the MFA's interactions with Iran. End Note.) Xu characterized Vaidi as being inflexible and showing no willingness to cooperate. Xu said that Vaidi is much "tougher" than his boss, Supreme National Security Council Secretary General Ali Larijani or Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials.

#### Iran's Obstinace Reflects International Pressure

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¶5. (C) Noting his years working in Iran as well as in his current position, Xu said that increasing international pressure on Iran will only result in greater resistance from Iran to comply with IAEA and UNSC demands. He asserted that there is a "group in Iran waiting for international provocation to aggressively push ahead its nuclear program" and that these individuals actually hope to see the UNSC adopt sanctions. Xu stated that this group is willing to stand up to the international community and to "bear the consequences" in order to cast Iran as an example of the perfect Islamic state for the Islamic world.

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#### "Young Turks" Sitting on the Fence

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¶6. (C) Xu described Iran's young, well-educated population as the "Young Turks." He said that overall the Young Turks are supportive of the current Iranian regime, but that this group wants normal relations with the United States. Xu, repeating himself three times, said that the United States should reach out to this group and "capture their hearts."

#### MFA Trifurcating Iran Responsibilities

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¶7. (C) Alluding to bureaucratic disagreements within the PRC MFA, Xu commented that the Iranian issue is complicated because it is being handled by three departments. Xu's Department, West Asia and African Affairs, is responsible for handling all bilateral discussions with Iran. The MFA Arms Control and Disarmament Department is responsible for handling the discussions at the IAEA as well as bilateral discussions between Beijing and third country governments other than Iran, while the MFA's International Organizations Department handles discussions at the UN Security Council. Xu said that this "creates a comprehensive picture but each department has its own specialized expertise."

#### Wang Lequan Visits Iran

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¶8. (C) Politburo member and Party Secretary General of Xinjiang province was visiting Iran at the same time AFM Cui visited. Xu said that Wang's visit was part of a "sister province" program and was the reciprocal visit after Iran sent a delegation to Xinjiang province a few years ago. Xu pointed out that Wang was meeting with local officials and party members and claimed that he is not there on central government business.

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